MOVING IN SEVERAL DIRECTIONS AT ONCE !

The Third Annual Report of the Association of Autonomous Astronauts

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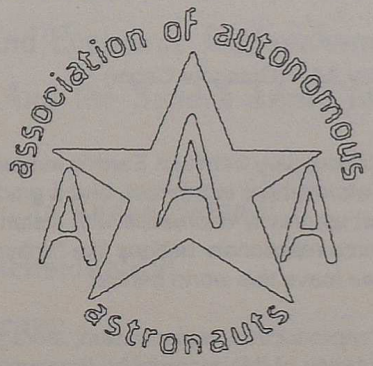
THE THIRD ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AUTONOMOUS ASTRONAUTS



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Moving In Several Directions At Once! —The Third Annual Report of the Association of Autonomous Astronauts

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There is no line, no hard boundary between Earth's atmosphere and space. At the Earth's surface, the atmosphere is thickest, and it gradually thins with increasing elevation. Just as gravity decreases with distance away from an object, the ability to enforce reactionary notions like "copyright" will gradually become impossible as we leave this world behind.

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Introduction

The days of this society are numbered. Its reasons and its merits have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; its inhabitants are divided into two parties, one of which wants to build their own spaceships and leave this society behind.

The Association of Autonomous Astronauts (AAA) was launched on April 23rd 1995 as the world's first independent and community-based space programme. A Five Year Plan was also established for creating, by the year 2000, a world-wide network of local, community-based AAA groups dedicated to building their own spaceships.

The publication of this Third Annual Report by the Association of Autonomous Astronauts not only marks the third anniversary of the AAA's launch, but also coincides with the start of the fourth phase to the AAA's Five Year Plan. This phase is a period of CONSOLIDATION, during which Autonomous Astronauts will examine the achievements that they have made so far and prepare for the final push into the year 2000.

The AAA is the most exciting space exploration programme active in the world today. The AAA's space travel has included: raves in space, amazing space suit designs, sex in zero gravitity, sharp critiques of government-funded space agencies, games of three-sided football and Intergalactic Conferences in Vienna and Bologna. This Third Annual Report shows that the AAA continues to move in several directions at once.

Association of Autonomous Astronauts
April 1998

We are not alone:

a review of the space race as seen from London, 1997/98

by Neil, Disconaut AAA

The activities of the AAA have helped detonate an explosion of interest in space that is reverberating throughout popular culture. It is impossible to go into a club, a record shop, an art gallery or a school classroom without being confronted with images of space travel. Open a magazine, turn on the TV, go to the cinema and it's the same. Space is the place and everybody, it seems, wants to be there.

For autonomous astronauts this a contradictory situation. At one level it confirms our analysis that we are not alone — the desire to experiment with life beyond the reaches of gravity, state and the economy has been unleashed and is becoming unstoppable. On the other hand not all space images are unambiguous expressions of this desire, and some are actively seeking to frustrate it.

Counter-AAA warfare

Unsurprisingly the most concerted efforts to undermine the AAA have come from those most threatened by it — the state space agencies, NASA in particular. In March 1998, NASA announced the discovery of frozen water on the moon. The proximity of this announcement to the AAA Intergalactic Conference in Bologna (April 1998) is not fortuitous. NASA are attempting to hijack the dreams and visions of autonomous spaceflight and channel them into support for its own discredited state space programme.

NASA's announcement was supposed to show that they alone have a practical programme for space exploration: land on the moon, use the water to support a space base there from which to launch trips to infinity and beyond. But what they really have in mind for the moon is not a springboard to adventure, but an extension of the corporate-military dominated world that we want to leave behind.

In the US and Japan, plans are being developed for lunar factories and hotels. The European Space Agency meanwhile is working with major companies such as Matra Marconi Space on a programme called EuroMoon 2000 to put a robot on the moon and later a manned exploration team. The British company AEA technology has explored the possibility of commercially exploiting resources on the moon (Guardian, 6 March 1998).

Moving In Several Directions At Once!

And who's going to change the sheets in the lunar hotels and work in the lunar factories? With austerity imposed to deny the working class the means to build our own spaceships, the plan is that people will put up with this drudgery as the price to pay for the chance of a voyage to the moon. It's the same strategy used to colonise the Americas — offer the dispossessed the hope of adventure and escape, entice them on to a ship to the 'New World' and get them to do all the dirty work.

In order to colonise the future NASA first has to repackage its past. In the USA, Tom Hanks is producing a $68m mini-series called "From Earth to the Moon", a heroic account of NASA's supposed wonder years. The aim of this shameless revisionist project is not only to present NASA in the most favourable light but to rewrite the whole history of the 1960s and early 1970s. This was the time when the US lost the Vietnam war and was torn apart by social conflicts as home. Focusing on the space programme as the most important feature of the period amounts to saying "Hey, forget all those unpatriotic hippies, forget Watergate, the real action was in space where our power was uncontested". Hanks has acknowledged the political nature of the project, stating that it is "absolutely about restoring trust in government" (Sunday Times, 15.3.98).

Fortunately there was little of this trust in evidence when NASA launched its Cassini space probe last year. With 33 kg of plutonium on board there was a real danger of large scale radioactive contamination, especially given NASA's record of rockets exploding on take-off. In October 1997 there were protests against the launch at Cape Canaveral and across the US, including the occupation of the NASA HQ in Washington DC. Disconaut AAA issued a leaflet inviting such protestors to "join us in our bid to create our own earth-friendly community-based space exploration programmes".

Advertising

The AAA's espousal of the potential of space travel for all has already been seized upon as a new marketing angle by advertisers. The most blatant example is the Equitable Life advert on British TV with an astronaut promising young people the chance of low level space flight by the time they retire (so long as they've got their pensions and life insurance sorted out).

As our ideas become more popular we can expect to see further attempts to trivialise and commodify them. Buzz Lightyear (the astronaut in the film Toy Story) was the most popular toy in Britain for Christmas 1996. In the future we could see toy companies flooding the market with build your own spaceship kits, complete with authentic (if unauthorised) AAA logos on the side.

Naturally we object to such corporate exploitation, but any short term profits for capitalism will be at the expense of its long term survival. Space toys are simply providing training materials for the next generation of autonomous astronauts. In bedrooms across the globe they are already playing with their Millennium Falcons, dreaming of joining the rebels in their fight against the Empire. Meanwhile our information war against the imperial forces has already started.

Art

The AAA's position in the space race may also be threatened by the activities of those artists who plunder radical ideas and serve them up as purely aesthetic entertainment to further their own careers. On the other hand not all 'cultural workers' (for want of a better term) have such motivations and some may generate ideas that can be practically applied in our own space programmes.

"Some kind of heaven" at the South London Gallery (July 1997) included an installation by Sylvie Fleury from Switzerland called "First spaceship on Venus", consisting of three large rockets (about 15 feet tall) covered in brown fake fur and emitting electronic noises. Disconaut AAA have previously advocated the use of fun fur and sequin space suits to counter the masculinist bias of space exploration, so we were very interested in the suggestion of applying this technique to the spaceship itself. Certainly this would make them more tactile and less starkly functional, as well as undermining the rocket = phallus fantasy.

A spaceship also featured in the "Aspirational Living" exhibition at the Oxo Tower on London's South Bank (Summer 1997). The programme asserted "Ask a child what the word aspirational means and they will draw you an eight foot silver rocket" and Gavin Turk and Alexander Boxill had used a child's drawing as the design for a silver rocket/cushion with a shiny vinyl surface, lying in a sand pit. The walls were painted black and chalk was supplied to encourage graffiti, most of which seemed to be on a space theme...."homos in space", "to infinity and beyond" and by the time we'd left "Space is the Place" and an AAA symbol.

The construction of life sized models of spaceships is a step forward — the next is to actually get them into orbit, and this shouldn't be too difficult. The Mir space station fiasco has demystified space technology — if such a creaky rust bucket can remain inhabitable, anything is possible. It has also demystified the notion of astronauts and cosmonauts as super-fit, super-intelligent, superhumans by showing them as normal people who can't find the screwdriver, and who entertain themselves playing tunes on a battered 1980s Casio keyboard.

Music

It is in the field of music that the AAA is making the most impact. Disconaut AAA have monitored numerous instances in the last year alone. The Beastie Boys in Dazed and Confused magazine wearing space suits... Mel B wearing the same outfit in the Spice Girls movie... Masters at Work remixing Atmosfear's disco classic "Dancing in outer space"... French electronic duo Air's "Sexy Boy" video (from their Moon Safari CD) with them walking on the moon... Spiritualized "Ladies and Gentlemen we are Floating in Space"...

Dance cultures in particular seem saturated with a yearning for space. Londoners going out dancing can choose from clubs like Space, Spacey, Space Race, NASA, Galactic Disco, Galaktic SoundLab, Galactic Sushi and the free parties put on by Astro Cafe. Everybody wants to create clubs that feel like being a spaceship. Disconaut AAA want to take this to the limit and create spaceships that feel like being in a club.

Disconaut AAA have always argued that dance floors are ideal launching pads for trips to space. Half the people there are on their way already and there is an energy level comparable to any rocket launcher. The act of dancing itself involves sensations of flight and the defiance of gravity. This was demonstrated in the photographic exhibition "Gotta Dance!" in the Kings Road, London (January 1998) which featured various shots of dancers — Ballet dancers, Lindyhoppers, Gene Kelly in a publicity shot for Singing in the Rain — all suspended in mid-air. We have observed further evidence of the will to flight in the emergence of people wearing angel/fairy wings at clubs and parties.

Nevertheless there are limits to the potential of many existing dance cultures for space exploration. Some of the people who are happy to use space imagery on flyers, club design, etc. actually want to keep us earthbound so that they can continue to make money out of us. And some of the people going to these clubs and parties have failed to grasp what is radically different about autonomous space exploration.

This was shown very clearly to us on a trip to Space Race in Brixton. The music was fine, but the women in our group were continually hassled and abused by lecherous beer monsters. The club's flyer proclaimed, "in space there are no barriers"; to which we unfortunately had to add, "but there are plenty of wankers". The whole point of getting into space is to get away from this rubbish.

Planning for obsolescence: towards the end of the AAA?

There is a danger that the AAA could ultimately become a victim of its own success, with our ideas ripped off by state space agencies, toy makers, advertisers, artists, and the music industry. At the same time the dissemination of our ideas is encouraging the proliferation of genuine autonomous initiatives across the world (and maybe beyond...). The AAA is not some kind of interstellar vanguard seeking to organise this diffuse field of activity, and perhaps we should anticipate the day when we will dissolve ourselves into a wider autonomous movement of dreamers, trouble makers, rocket builders and astral planers, lying in the gutter but looking at the stars.

On Becoming an Autonomous Astronaut

by John Eden, Raido AAA

"This man spends his life wonderfully! While still a boy, he reads with interest books and stories on astronomy. With his first earned money he buys an astronomical telescope... the name of his daughter is Astra, the name of his son Mercury. Every thought, every step, manifests his aspiration for interplanetary flight!"
Pravda editorial 1934

24th May 1962: John Glenn, a US Marine Corps pilot, becomes the second American in orbit. He uses up most of the Aurora 7's fuel supply getting into a good position to photograph sunrises. For this he is severely reprimanded by NASA.

To become an Autonomous Astronaut you don't just need to understand the history of independent space exploration and act accordingly. You must also to be something different from the attitudes and values of the society we want to leave behind. We must be ourselves first and foremost — wherever that may take us. The "militant" posturing so adored by so many puritanical political activists is of no use to the AAA. It is a mindset that splits the individual into two, separating people's real individual and social needs — the reasons why they cannot stand

life on planet earth, from their actions — their attempts to leave this world behind. If the AAA's programme turns into another job, even for one person, then we will have failed utterly.

The militant as an individual, and political groups as organisations, suffer from a sort of displacement of personality — what they want and how they try to get there are two completely different things. That is why our parties are just as valuable as our texts. That is why we move in several directions at once.

The AAA is not a programme that one puts into practice or makes others put into practice, but a social movement. Those of us who develop and defend the AAA's ideas do not have any advantage over others except a clearer understanding and a more rigorous expression; like everyone who is not especially concerned by theory, we feel the *practical* need for establishing autonomous communities in outer space.

We are not leaders or experts — and never will be. People who expect everyone involved with the network to be able to know about every aspect of space travel are deluding themselves. We cherish the learning process, the dialogue between interested individuals. That is how all of our ideas have developed, and that is how we will achieve our aims. Our training methods reflect this approach - they are as much about social interaction as they are about acquiring skills. Those who project their hopes and desires onto us must understand that they are *involved* — they are astronauts too.

There is no point in some kind of "élite" group of autonomous astronauts getting into space, our trajectories must be open to all. We are not proposing some sort of zero gravity hippie drop-out commune that excludes everyone else.

We do not have the future mapped out, waiting to fall off the shelf when the time is right. We only have a limited idea of what communities in outer space will look like at their beginning, let alone after a hundred years. Finding out is often the best bit, the *whole point* of the games we play. We are concerned with possibilities and experimentation, not with having the "correct line", or being right in retrospect.

The difficulty lies in the need to go beyond traditional notions of space travel while not rejecting relevant concepts. It is not enough to understand that NASA, The ESA and their counterparts in Eastern Europe have nothing in common with what we are trying to achieve. One must also see what has actually changed over the last 60 years, and which aspects of their technology can be adapted in the light of the present situation.

Zero gravity communities are at hand, only the inertia of society prevents them from forming. But their basis is there, and we will develop the propulsion to reach them.

The first step is to consider the issues, to engage in dialogue with like-minded people. The AAA's network of groups is a reflection of this stage. Anyone reading this can contribute. We have been conditioned by the media over the last 60 years to place our hopes and aspirations in outer space, but it is only the AAA that has taken up this challenge seriously. As individuals we are isolated, atomised. But if we can come together and pool our ideas and skills then community-based space travel will become not just a possibility, but a necessity. We have been fooled, conned into letting governments and armies get into space on our behalf. Occasionally they will dangle little tit bits in front of us like "life on Mars" or "ice on the Moon", but nothing really changes. It must be apparent that their interests are not ours. Now is the time for everyone, for all of us to do it for ourselves — and for each other.

Every man and every woman is an autonomous astronaut.

Space Travel By Any Means Necessary

Talk given at the AAA's Intergalactic Conference

Vienna, Earth June 21-22 1997

by Jason Skeet, Inner City AAA

I represent Inner City AAA, which is just one branch on the Association of Autonomous Astronauts' world-wide network of local, community-based groups dedicated to developing their own strategies for building spaceships. The AAA is infact the world's only independent, community-based space programme, and what I want to suggest to you is that this Intergalactic Conference is happening at a very important time for anyone in Austria interested in these issues concerning space exploration. Very recently the Austrian Space Agency publicly stated that they no longer support manned space flight; for them it is not a viable option. So this means that anyone in Austria who wishes to go into outer space has no choice but to create their own space programme.

Moving In Several Directions At Once!

Now the organisers of this conference did invite representatives of government-funded space groups to attend; we spoke to the European Space Agency, to the Austrian Space Agency and even the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (who have their headquarters here in Vienna). None of them were willing to send a representative, and even Franz Viehbock, Austria's most famous state-sponsored astronaut, was unable to attend: apparently he informed the conference organisers that he felt alarmed at the AAA's open hostility towards NASA. Well, of course the AAA has never tried to hide its hostility towards all government-funded space agencies, but we are still prepared to debate publicly with them, and to open up negotiations with them concerning how they intend to re-distribute their resources to the Association of Autonomous Astronauts.

OK, so this Intergalactic Conference actually represents the convergence of three very distinct elements within the AAA's independent space programmes; that is, it is a recruitment drive, a media invasion, and a propaganda effort. Infact, this conference demonstrates the practical application of the AAA's desire to introduce non-deterministic methods to the construction of spaceships. This is a point that I will return to later when I discuss the complexities of three-sided thinking. John Eden, the AAA's current Press Officer, will talk later about the AAA's various media invasion techniques, so I want to concentrate for the moment on the propaganda aspect to our space programmes.

One very important promotional ploy that the AAA has used is the promise of sexual experimentation in zero gravity. Indeed, whilst all other existing space programmes refuse to conduct any research into sex in space, the AAA has declared that we intend to openly explore the sexual possibilities of zero gravity. Autonomous Astronauts have already designed several experiments that they wish to conduct to test out our hypothesis that sex in space will be even better than it is on planet earth. However, whilst we will carry out these experiments, it is important to stress that the improved quality of sex in space is not the only reason to build spaceships.

It seems that since the AAA was launched the idea of independent space travel has gained a wider exposure in more mainstream channels. This is not only the direct result of AAA propaganda, but also due to a process that, following on from evolution theorist Rupert Sheldrake, I want to describe as 'Morphic Resonance'. As our ideas filter out through society, and as more people become exposed to the possibilities of space exploration, it becomes easier for others to be affected as well, and this process cannot be expressed in purely causal terms. We are already seeing our ideas resonate in films, music and advertising and amongst people who know nothing of our existence. This has helped to create a wider acceptance in the possibility of non-governmental groups building spaceships,

and the idea that space exploration technology is going to get cheaper and more widely available. However, the AAA is the world's only space programme that makes technological issues secondary to our concern with what we will be doing when we form autonomous communities in space. What interests us about technology is how a specific technology can be used, and, of course, who gets to use that technology.

Let's now return to this three-sided aspect to this Intergalactic Conference. I want to suggest that this three-sidedness demonstrates the introduction of non-deterministic methods to the construction of spaceships, and shows how, at an organisational level, the AAA has embraced the complexities of what I will call 'Three Body Dynamics'. Mathematicians have long since realised that when they introduce three objects into an environment where they can all affect each other in some way, then the results of this cannot be predicted. Chaos theory has in part been developed from this, and there will be another AAA speaker talking about that in more detail. For the moment I just want to say that state-funded space agencies have yet to absorb the full implications of this uncertainty; indeed, the moment that they do realise that the universe is subject to intense and random proliferations that are beyond human cognition, these space agencies will conclude that the only course left open to them is to realise their own extinction by promptly handing over their resources to the AAA. So, whilst die-hard universalists will be horrified at the idea that pure chance is as fundamental to space exploration as a desire to escape from gravity, the AAA regards all this as further support for our ability to move in several directions at once.

Now I shall move in another direction. When the AAA was launched on April 23rd 1995, we also began a Five Year Plan to establish by the year 2000 a world-wide network of local, community-based AAA groups. This Five Year Plan has now moved into a new phase which we have called the Dreamtime. The Dreamtime refers to a collective process whereby Autonomous Astronauts explore the possibilities that open up when they form autonomous communities in space. And this Dreamtime also relates to the projects that have been happening leading up to this conference. Behind you is a spaceship that has been constructed with an interior entirely built and designed by various groups of Viennese school children over the last two weeks. This was a project organised by Public Netbase and the Kinder Museum. And at Public Netbase this week we have had a project with a group of teenagers who travelled to the future to take over the abandoned Russian space station Mir. They made a report about their experiences on the space station to send back home to their friends and family in the form of a world wide web site, which you can look at on the terminals at the back there.

So all this connects with the AAA's Dreamtime. The Dreamtime asks, "What is the point of going into space if all you do is replicate the same conditions that prevail on planet earth?". You know, what is the point of, for example, going to the moon if all you do when you get there is visit a McDonalds?

I want to conclude this short talk by picking up the propaganda thread again. Since the collapse of the Cold War, government space programmes like NASA have struggled desperately for a new identity. NASA no longer has the Soviet enemy to compete with, and must dream up new excuses for itself, like the life on Mars scam last August which was basically an attempt by NASA to get the US Congress to give them more money. The Cold War space race was nothing more than a two-sided football match played between competing ideologies, and as such was designed to hide the social forces, on both sides, that maintains the state, corporate and military monopoly of space exploration. Today, we perceive a three-sided race between government space agencies, emerging private enterprise space groups, and the Association of Autonomous Astronauts. This contest is becoming a complex, interactive and continuously evolving game of chance that both the proponents of government space agencies and the free-market propagandists are unable to even comprehend given their continuing attachment to binary thought structures.

Meanwhile the AAA has been developing new trinary concepts, like our use of three-sided football played amongst ourselves and designed to develop essential skills in the art of deception. I don't want to say too much about three-sided football because tomorrow we will be playing it as part of a training day for Autonomous Astronauts, but I will say for now that Intergalactic Conferences, like games of three-sided football, will be organised throughout the AAA's Five Year Plan, in order to help map out how our independent and community-based space programmes move and develop in complex, contradictory and completely unpredictable ways.

Thank-you.

Too Much Fun Just For Scientists

by Hari Kunzru

Space, as a certain television programme likes to remind us, is the final frontier. It's a place of mystery that promises both great discoveries and — if Captain Kirk's weekly wrestling-bouts with rubber-suited aliens are anything to go by — great dangers.

But who decides how humans are to cope with this cosmic question mark?

Until recently that was an irrelevant question. Only the world's biggest governments had the resources to get into orbit, and apart from a few grumbles about the amount of money space exploration was diverting from social welfare programmes, no one seemed too bothered about that. But with the end of the Cold War, and the corresponding end of public willingness to fund extravagant space research, talk has suddenly started of space travel as a commercial activity.

These days, market forces reign supreme, and the notion of space tourism is being actively promoted by various groups, especially in America. An award of $5 to $10 million, known as the X Prize (www.xprize.org/) is on offer to the first group that can fly a reusable suborbital spacecraft carrying at least three people twice in 14 days. A consortium of 16 aerospace companies, known as the Space Transport Association, is actively lobbying Hollywood for propaganda support in promoting the "new space age". The cosmos, it seems, is up for grabs.

Meanwhile, the politics of space travel are creeping up the agenda. Should space be the sole preserve of governments? Should it be open to commercial exploitation? As early as 1967 the United Nations had started to deal with the thornier political problems of space exploration, drawing up a "Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies", which at the last count had 91 signatories. The treaty sets out various extraterrestrial fundamentals, such as a ban on nuclear weapons, a duty to tell other governments if your astronauts encounter anything scary, and the paramount principle that, for the moment at least, space should "belong" to all states equally.

Moving In Several Directions At Once!

All this seems well and good, but for one group of skyward-looking radicals, the choice between government-controlled space exploration, and commercial space-exploitation, is no choice at all. The Association of Autonomous Astronauts (aaa.t0.or.at/) has a nice logo, no money and a big dream — space travel by the people, for the people, right now. The AAA's five year plan (now in its second year) foresees the establishment of a worldwide network of community-based groups, devoted to building their own spaceships.

They are demanding that NASA, the European Space Agency and all other government-funded exploration bodies immediately surrender all their assets to the AAA, which has no overall leadership, just a network of cells, each of which is free to follow its own route to infinity and beyond.

The AAA wants nothing less than the liberation of the human spirit to imagine the true possibilities of life among the stars. Er, right. So you can see why I decided to travel to their first Intergalactic Conference in Vienna, in order to ask them the burning question: "Do you think you could run that by us one more time?"

The conference brought together would-be astronauts from around the world, together with fellow travellers and the merely curious, all of whom gathered in a hangar-like hall in Vienna's Museumsquartier to listen to accounts of the AAA's activities, and related presentations. An Italian astrophysicist described her discovery of " the music of the galaxies"; a bemused astronomer from the Austrian national space agency wished everyone well and then made for the door.

The audience seemed to consist mainly of Vienna's young and groovy, with representatives from Austrian TV and various print publications looking for men in shiny spacesuits.

Failing to find any Neil Armstrong lookalikes, they gathered round a gang of small children, part of an AAA-run project to design and build their own spaceship (more Blue Peter than Cape Canaveral). Meanwhile, AAA representatives, whose earthly activities range from publishing and community work, to those bastions of anti-social behaviour, Web design, DJ-ing and the dole, spread the word of their five-year mission, and recruited young Viennese.

At the post-conference picnic in a Vienna park (for technical reasons the Moon was not available), some key AAA flight personnel explained the nature of their mission. Patric O'Brien, a Sun Ra loving 40-something "psychogeographer" and member of East London AAA, was matter-of-fact.

"Really there's no option about going to space. It's there, it's around us. If we start moving in any direction, we've got to go to space, it's just that people are trying to keep us exactly where we are."

Jason Skeet, who, in his twenties, is the main ideologue of Inner City AAA, added: "It's not a joke, it's very serious. What we're trying to do is destroy what we've described as the military-governmental-corporate monopoly of space exploration."

So what's actually wrong with the way the governments and corporations are doing things? Apart from the occasional launch problem, NASA seems reasonably technically competent. For AAA press officer John Eden, the problem lies, not with technology, but in the authorities' limited vision.

"There's no point in going into outer space if you're just going to have the same kind of life as you do on planet Earth. We don't want to end up on the Moon and then just have a row of shops with M&S and WH Smiths up there. Outer space represents a new opportunity, possibly a new stage in human evolution, and you can't take your gravity-bound preconceptions into outer space if you're going to use it to its full benefit."

But what should we be doing among the stars, if taking rock samples is not enough? "Whatever you want. The AAA is about travelling in different directions. We're not going to dictate to anyone."

In order to encourage people to imagine space in a joyful, playful way, the AAA is offering its own million pound prize — the XXX Prize. It will be given to the first privately funded team to launch a craft into suborbital space and engage in sexual intercourse. Any number or combination of people may be involved (this is all about imagining limitless possibilities, after all), the only condition being that visual proof of successful docking must be provided. The money has yet to be raised, though one idea is to approach David Bowie — the rationale being that the man who recorded *Space Oddity* will surely see the point of the enterprise.

Asked why they are part of the AAA, members give answers ranging from "because I think it is the most important (r)evolutionary movement active in the world today" to "it looked like fun".

But although the AAA spends rather more time playing three-sided football and imagining space-based raves than designing propulsion engines or studying star maps, it is also making a serious point about technology. As Konrad Becker, one of the Austrian organisers of the Intergalactic Conference, put it: "The issue of the

emancipatory use of technology is very dear to us. All technologies — like data networks — can be used for liberation or enslavement. By asking people to imagine better uses for space technology, we're also asking them to think about what's happening back here on Earth."

This article is reprinted from the Daily Telegraph's July 27th 1997 "Connected"' supplement.

Raido AAA Vienna Conference Report

by Luther Blissett

I arrived in Vienna with the representative of Sheffield's Inner Space Agency (ISA) after an enjoyable, but delayed flight. As the underground system had shut down for the day we made our way to Public Netbase by foot. We discussed 80s industrial music, mathematic modelling and whether we were lost. We eventually arrived at Public Netbase feeling pretty exhausted but exhilarated and were welcomed by several autonomous astronauts from London, France and Vienna. We talked for a while and then got our heads down in preparation for the morning.

I slept well and dreamt of deserts, giant butterflies and strange machines.

Saturday morning was spent planning our activities, welcoming others and exploring the environment. Vienna was a welcome change from London. Some of us had a wander round to get some supplies and take it all in. The verdict was "pretty, if over regimented".

We returned to Public Netbase for lunch. The complex is situated in the centre of Vienna, with the rest of the Museums, which meant we were sleeping within a stone's throw of both the supposed Spear of Destiny and several Bosch paintings. Netbase struck me as a pretty cool place to be - nice kitchen, loads of ISDN terminals, nice people.

After eating, we headed over to the hall where the conference was being held. It was impressively big. A pyramidal spaceship had been constructed in the centre of the hall and local kids from the Kinder Museum had decorated it in the weeks leading up to the conference. The decor inside the ship was suitably psychedelic

(in stark contrast to the interior of NASA spaceships which are dull as fuck). The ship included a number of monitors and other artefacts, and a platform for various uses (this was later used for skinning up by some delegates during the rave in space training). A representative from Inner City AAA had been working with some of the kids to develop a website outlining their philosophies for living in space. I found the visual elements to be very interesting, but was unable to decipher much of the text because it was (naturally) in German. However Raido AAA delegates were pleased to find a number of parallels with the kids' ideas to our own. They had collectively decided to name the ship "Achtung! Wir Kommen!" (AWK) which translates as "Watch out! Here we come!". An admirable sentiment! Some of the afternoon was spent talking to the kids about subjects as diverse as life in space, skateboarding, music and going to school in Austria and England. They were well into it.

Other than the spaceship the hall also contained:
- A wall display of AAA propaganda and conference details.
- A Bar
- A number of ISDN terminals in suitably "alien" shells.
- An information, literature and merchandise stall.
- A stack of video monitors playing AAA training films and other material (like the Sun Ra film)
- A stage with a number of screens, mics, a lectern, record and CD decks and mixers.

Public Netbase had excelled themselves with the conference brochure, a huge poster with AAA texts printed on the reverse. When exploring the town we saw that many of them had been fly-posted around the place. A special conference edition of Escape from Gravity had also been produced, and a number of special conference t-shirts had been printed by Inner City AAA with a "Space Travel By Any Means Necessary" slogan on the front and the conference logo on the back. There were two cool kids from the Kinder Museum wearing these t-shirts doing door duties. They fluctuated between welcoming the parents of the kids involved in making the ship, and skateboarding around like demons.

Saturday afternoon was the official launch of the AWK ship and some TV crew and other media people showed up to check it out. DJ Pita had been brought in to provide sounds for the occasion, which was great for our own John Eden because he went to school with him. In fact the tapes Pita did for John about 12 years ago probably play a large part in the poor bloke's twisted outlook now. The kids danced and ran about like kids damn well should, but some of the rather more mature people present seemed a little unnerved by the wall of sound, and Pita's set was cruelly curtailed.

There was much speculation amongst the delegates on the long term effects of AAA ideas on such a bright, creative selection of young astronauts — we await the next few years with interest!

The evening saw a number of speakers take the stage. The proceedings were introduced and compered by Konrad Becker of Public Netbase. The running order was as follows:

An Inner City AAA delegate gave a talk introducing the ideas and history of the AAA. It was well received.

Next up was Fiorella Terenzi, who was billed as "a cross between Carl Sagan and Madonna". I found her presentation style interesting, but the content was of little use to our group. Fiorella is interested in the vibrations of the universe. She talked us through some basic astronomy and physics with some CD-Roms she has produced as a visual aid. The actual sounds made by the vibrations she has studied were a great selection of gargantuan rumbling and harsh frequencies. I was pleased to hear that Fiorella had been inspired to produce her own music by the sounds. Unfortunately the results were (in my opinion...) cobblers tinkly ambient dolphin crystal-healing unicorn music. A shame. The rest of her talk took a similar turn - a rather Californian new-agey feel. Nevertheless, she has presence and it was in good contrast to the rest of the evening!

Professor Werner Weiss from the University of Vienna spoke about the history of science and space travel. I'm not sure what he made of the rest of it, but it was quite funny watching him try to frame the proceedings in some kind of academic context, even one presented to lay-people. He droned on a bit, but I liked him.

The Inner Space Agency delegate was unsure whether he would present a talk at all, but came up with the goods after being bribed with beer tokens. It was an excellent discourse that took in Marxist theory, slag heaps, (un)employment and space. Heartfelt and to the point. An introduction to the talk appears in issue 3 of Autotoxicity magazine.

Die Institut fur Langstreckenfluge presented a video report concerning the isolation of outer space travel which was entertaining and surreal.

A Raido AAA delegate gave a talk on the AAA and the media which was accompanied by drunken exclamations off stage from other people involved with the group. Cheeky buggers.

An East London AAA delegate gave a talk on how the AAA is heralding a new

cultural renaissance.

Some activists from a local radio station presented a video of their training activities for getting into space do broadcast their shows from a satellite. This was an excellent surprise - they just showed up and the video was a great mixture of low budget humour and creativity. A representative of the group gave a short talk explaining what they were trying to do. One of the delegates approached them for a copy of the video, but this hasn't arrived at the time of writing. They interviewed me about the conference for their station.

The rave-in-space training event followed the talks and was just the right combination of hedonism and confusion. A special mention should be made here for DJ's Scud and Christoph who were hardcore enough to see the thing through until sunrise. I think I crashed out at about 2, but this can only be an estimate because of the inevitable temporal-distortions that accompany such activities. For this reason I am unable to recall the subject matter of my dreams that night.

Sunday morning was spent recovering from the rigours of our hectic training schedule. Odd things were afoot. The ISA delegate noticed an absolutely incredible number of grand pianos being loaded onto trucks in the courtyard where we were staying. Closer examination revealed that they weren't even real pianos anyway, more like props for some weird show involving masses of pianos.

We had planned to go to the moon on Sunday afternoon but this was cancelled after our hosts revealed that this sort of activity would be halted by instant police intervention. Despite this, we were able to play a fast and furious game of 3-sided football in the courtyard of the museums. The delegates that were unfamiliar with the game got into it swiftly, and all attempts at bi-polar competition were thwarted. The rest of the afternoon was spent having a picnic and talking to journalists. The Raido AAA posse decided that the proposed astral projection workshop would be hazardous given the fatigue of many of the trainees. Instead, the weekend was rounded off by chilling out at a local restaurant, swearing at Alec Empire on TV, and playing with Netbase's rather wonderful techno-toys.

There was a child-like "fairy tale" variety to my dreams that night. I recall that jumping friendly fruit was involved, as was the kid's TV presenter Johnny Ball.

I flew back to the UK at some indecent time in the morning the next day.

A DAY WITH THE AAA

by Riccardo Balli, AAA Bologna

"We don't think that UFOs and aliens are of the same nature. We believe that what has been seen in the skies is part of this planet story. A story that we're ready to tell"
103 Squadra Vril[1]

What follows is a report of the 23 April 1997 ufological deriving organised by AAA Bologna to celebrate the second anniversary of the AAA's Five Year Plan for establishing autonomous communities in outer space. The ufological deriving was guided by Mr Alessandro Zanotti, AAA Bologna ufologist.

San Giovanni in Monte square (Bologna) 3.30pm. The day was sunny end clear. A wonderful day in April.

Autonomous Astronaut: There you are, a wonderful day, isn't it?

A.A.: Yeah, have you got the AAA t-shirts?

A.A.: Yeah, the guys from London sent five of them. This one is for you.

A group of 5 or 6 people arrive.

Public: Is it here - the thing about UFOs?

A.A.: Yeah. How did you know about it?

P.: From the newspaper. Have a look at this fucking cool article in the "Unità"[2] entitled "Here come the space revolutionaries". But what's going to happen?

Other people arrive.

A.A.: A ufological deriving.

P.: What the fuck is that?

A.A.: Well, the deriving practice was a strategy of urban subversion played by the situationists at the end of the 50s in Paris...

P.: Leave it out! Are you doing a lecture or what? I just want to fucking know what is going to happen!!

A.A.: Easy my friend. This is going to happen: a bloke named A.Zanotti, who is the AAA Bologna ufologist, will guide us through some Bologna ufological sites.

Other people arrive, amongst them a radio journalist.

P.: What is a ufological site?

A.A.: It's just a place where someone has seen a UFO.

Luther Blissett arrives.

Luther Blissett: Hi guys, where is Zanotti the druid?

A.A.: He's late!

L.B.: He thinks he's a rock star, doesn't he?

A.A.: aaaahahahah!

A.A.: ahahahah!

Radio Journalist: Hi, I'm a Radio Onda D'urto[3] journalist. Can you tell something about AAA? What is that?

A RAI[4] TV journalist arrives.

A.A.: The AAA is an international association that wants to organise an independent space exploration programme...

J.: Cool, I know what you mean. You are neo-situationists, aren't you? I do media pranks as well. I'm a conceptual artist who lives on being a journalist, you know how it is with art, fucking difficult to live on it...

A.A.: Just a second — Zanotti is coming!

Zanotti: Hi guys, I apologise for being late. Cool t-shirts, gimme one of them immediately.

L.B.: Hi Zanotti!

Another group of people arrive.

A.A.: He's the ufologist that will lead the deriving!!!

RAI.: Hi, I've just come to film this for the local TV news programme. I'll follow you with the camera, you are the association of astronauts, aren't you?

A.A.: The Association of Autonomous Astronauts, or "triple A", please. OK. you're allowed to film.

Zanotti: We'll wait another 5 minutes then leave!!

Moving In Several Directions At Once!

J.: You were saying that the AAA is an international association?

A.A.: Yeah, at the moment there are AAA groups in England, Scotland, Wales, France and in Italy. But it's getting bigger everyday!!

J.: So what are you doing at AAA Bologna at the moment?

A.A.: Many things. The AAA is a network of groups that move in several directions at once and each group has its own specific interest. Personally at the moment I'm working on an anthology of AAA texts called "A taste of lunar dust: the Association of Autonomous Astronauts" to be released by an Italian publisher. Nothing is sure at the moment, but I hope to succeed in this project.

J.: Tell me about your cultural influences. The situationists in particular, I guess?

A.A.: Look, without any doubt we're influenced by the situationists, but actually dada is very important for us...

Zanotti: The dadaists have done everything in art that had to be done at the beginning of the century!!!

The journalist starts to film.

Zanotti: It's 4 o'clock. Shall we wait a little more?

L.B.: No, let's go, there are 38 of us, a fucking big group, let's go!

A.A.: The ufological deriving is starting, let everybody follow us.

J.: What do you think about ufology?

A.A.: It's a fucking popular end of the millennium subject. Just think about those mainstream movies like "Independence Day" and "Mars Attacks" or the TV series "X-files". Ufology is just a branch of AAA interests. We chose it, because we wanted to do something popular. We're fed up with some avant-garde elitism. We're interested in using (and subverting) mainstream codes.

L.B.: I have already heard about this!!!!

J.: So you are not interested in ufology?

A.A.: Yes and no. But if you want to speak specifically about ufology, have a chat with Mr. Zanotti.

J.: I got your "A day with AAA" flyer here. Is AAA also a musical group?

A.A.: Yeah, it's another A.A.A. Bologna project, the AAA Bologna sound system.

J.: What kind of music you play?

A.A.: Hard to say, let's say electronic experimental. We're very interested in what

is happening in the German end Finnish electronic scene. In Helsinki there' s a fucking cool electronic scene with real experimentors, independent labels and great raves. There techno music still has a revolutionary content. Not like in Italy, where it's all shitty commercial stuff or stupid alternative cliché.

J.: You are interested in organising raves in space, aren't you?

A.A.: Yeah, we're fed up with raves in squats or in the wood. We're organising a rave in space for the year 2000.

The AAA group arrive to the first ufological site, Gates Maggiore.

Z.: This where I saw a UFO for the first time. I was only five. I used to live in that flat overlooking Gates Maggiore. It was a hot night of August. Suddenly I woke up and felt the need to open up the window. I started to look at the sky and I saw a formation of coloured rhombus. I started to stare at that object as if I was hypnotised by it. Since then I've started to read books and magazines of ufology, to meet people that share the same interests and so on. As I used to say I made an alliance with a UFO[5]

The AAA group leaves Gates Maggiore and direct to Trento Trieste square (Bologna).

J.: Is AAA into New Age culture?

A.A.: Not at all! Frankly I think that this new age trend is just a money or a fashion thing. The AAA hasn't got anything to do with new age, instead it has got a lot to do with the possibility of leaving this millennium behind.

J.: Can you be more explicit please?

A.A.: The AAA is a narrative game, a logic disconnection, a political perspective, a dada blurp, but above a project to escape the millennium.

J.: Can you please be more clear?

L.B.: prprprprprp!

The group arrive in Trento Trieste square. The journalist seems fucking tired of hanging around with such a heavy camera on his shoulder.

Z.: This is the second and last - for today's deriving - ufological site. It happened in July 1991. It was 8pm, I was heading to a friend's house, when I saw a very big square very high in the sky. Never could explain what it was?

P.: How big was the square?

Z.: Impossible to say it, it was too high in the sky.

Moving In Several Directions At Once!

P.: You didn't take any drugs or alcohol, did you?

Z.: Everyone who knows me knows that I'm straight-edge.

P.: What do you think of Centro Ufologico Nazionale[6]?

Z.: I respect their scientific approach to the subject, but the AAA works in a completely different way.

P.: Is this all a prank?

Z.: It's up to you.....

Notes:

1) 103 Squadra Vril is a fake documentary made by some AAA's Bologna members about the Nazi research on UFOs.
2) "Unità" is an Italian newspaper. Founded by Antonio Gramsci, it's now the biggest "left-wing" newspaper.
3) Radio Onda D'urto is an alternative radio in Milan.
4) RAI is the Italian radio and TV broadcasting company.
5) As I wrote at the beginning of the text, this is just a summary of the ufolgical deriving report. Here the original text goes on for longer, quoting bizarre esoteric-urbanistic references that explain Zanotti's UFO alliance.
6) Centro Ufologico Nazionale is the Italian centre for scientific UFO studies.

WORKING CLASS KIDS AGAINST SPACE IMPERIALISM

Only those whose boots stomp the ground will conquer the skies

by Fabrizio P. Belletati

In the name of Luther Blissett "I" announce the foundation of the SHITS (Skin Heads as Independent Travellers in Space).

Proletarians have never benefited by any space exploration programme launched by the great Powers. NASA in particular, that gigantic parasite, dissipated billions of dollars in order to take workers away from their everyday exploitation, inducing

them to passively gaze at the deeds of yankee imperialism and the conquest of the "last frontier". NASA introduced the average chauvinist redneck male as the cultural and aesthetic representative of the whole human species (in the American TV series *Northern Exposure*. a character named "Maurice Minnefield" effectively parodies pathetic flag-waving ex-astronauts). NASA has always attempted to militarise and commodify outer space (remember the infamous Ronald Reagan's SDI plan).

The Associations of Autonomous Astronauts fight the present-day state, military and corporate monopoly of space travel, and exhort the oppressed of this world to build their own spaceships and get together into free communities of cosmonauts. The revolutionary proletariat has the power to expose the deceptions of the space travel establishment.

But I think that the AAA project must keep its distance from Hippie/New Age bullshit — we're talking about class war — neither some kind of utopian-escapist plan (e.g. *The Jefferson Starship Blows Against The Empire*) nor some *Star Trek* Kennedyan dream — we're talking about Jello Biafra's rant *Why I'm Glad That The Shuttle Blew Up*.

The subcultural cross-fertilisation which originated the Skinhead style reached its peak in 1969, i.e. whilst NASA was organising and staging the first moon landing hoax. The creative clash between West-Indian music (Ska, Rocksteady and early reggae) and the Hard Mod look defines the so-called "spirit of '69". We've got to hang on to this spirit of '69, and oppose it to the other, symbolised by the star spangled banner on a TV studio moon ground.

Original skinheads, suedeheads and later street punk skinheads COULDN'T GIVE A TOSS about such nerveless middle-class counterculture à la Jefferson Starship. Skinhead subculture can provide autonomous astronauts with a style and a sartorial rhetoric which break both with liberalism and hippy shit. Moreover, both the Suedehead evolution and the modernist heritage can work as stylistic North Stars and orient our efforts to an essential "proletarian elegance". It's a matter of self-respect: we can't figure what clothes the inhabitants of other planets have on, but certainly we won't go to the rendez-vous dressed like shaggy buffoons!

Skinhead Moonstomp is the title of a classic Ska anthem. That's how we're gonna deal with zero gravity: skipping about on a steady upbeat rhythm. Long live SHITS! Death to NASA!

No to Blairism and Economic Rationalism, Yes to Weightlessness and Exploration

(excerpt from 'On Filming Large Objects in the Sky')

by Oceania AAA

What is missing is not more theorising, not more passive autonomous 'zones', not another pirate radio station, but a truly active autonomy. The AAA say that not only must we reclaim the streets, but more generally we must reclaim the spaces. We must (re)construct, perform and explore these spaces.

These spaces may be conceptual, emotional, physical or political. They may be present, past or future, but they are just as much yours to simulate and explore as anyone else's. Our tools may be pyschogeographical, physical, emotional or virtual.

This active reclamation of spaces provides the conceptual ground plane for the exploration of new spaces as an *ongoing* project, one that can finally achieve its full social potential. We are not seeking a utopia but only the realisation of each individual's full potential as an autonomous astronaut.

The tools of the postmodern may save the sanity of some individuals who are prepared to study its poetic texts, but what will change through that? What has changed since the first Temporary Autonomous Zones, the Thousand Antennas...? Our way out of this is not simply to disengage as individuals from hyper-reality, but to actually participate in a new simulation, one that is viral and can act as a capsule for our dreams. This enactment, these performances, the spontaneous generation of Autonomous Astronautics, will provide a platform for our own realisations. We may not have spaceships parked outside primed for lift-off to another blue planet, but we can be sure that when we do it will be crewed by an infected mongrelised race of autonomous astronauts who are prepared to dream.

The AAA goes beyond the ideal of tactical media to subvert dominant media images but also inserts its own simple but powerful idea...

YOU ARE AN ASTRONAUT
YOU MUST TRAVEL THROUGH SPACE

With this simple proposition the AAA intends not only to subvert media by its own positivism but to impact the industrial and political machines through the irresistible force of community dreaming.

Note:
The Oceania AAA launchpad is located on One Tree Hill in London, SE23. It is the site of many previous space programmes and resistance, from Boudica, Leader of the Iceni, to the enclosure riots. It forms the southern-most point of the leyline complex centred around Greeenwich, and is sometimes referred to as the Honor Oak for the tree that stood at its summit. Elizabeth I performed ancient rites to protect the power of the monarchy, as did Aleister Crowley in the graveyard on the northern slopes. It is also believed to be the site of an iron age fort. Throughout English history its has formed an important communications function due to the visibility of its beacons and signals. During the second world war it supported AA emplacements at its summit. Oceania AAA have reclaimed the foundations of this gun emplacement as the site for its launches and broadcasts into space. Operations are controlled from the disused council nursery on the slopes of the hill. Investigation has revealed that before being used to grow plants it was a fireworks factory and the ground is contaminated with propellants, further proof of the astronautical value of this site. To celebrate its reclamation a three-sided football field has also been constructed on the southern slopes of the hill.

C.A.A. Dellschau and the Sonora Aero Club Mystery

Forwarded by John Berndt to the Invisible College

In the early 1920s, an elderly eccentric named C.A.A. Dellschau died in Houston, Texas, leaving behind a number of home-made "books" containing an estimated 7,000 pages of drawings and hand-written notations, all dealing with aviation or aeronautics. In the late 1960s, Peter Navarro rescued a number of them from a Houston dump.

The drawings in the old books depict strange and wonderful flying machines. When combined with information gleaned from the accompanying writings and annotations, many of them in a cryptic form that had not only to be deciphered but also translated from German, they tell an almost unbelievable story.

According to Dellschau's mysterious books, sometime around 1850 a group of men who were interested in aeronautics met in a Sonora, California hotel to form the Aeroy Club, later renamed the Sonora Aero Club. The organisation was financed by an even more mysterious society from "back East," which was known only as NYMZA. The local club was composed mainly of Germans and a few Englishmen who were fanatically secretive about their efforts and demanded that members abide by strict rules. In fact, shortly after one member threatened to go public with some of the group's discoveries, he is said to have fallen victim to a mysterious aerial explosion allegedly arranged by some of his fellow club members.

If Dellschau's manuscript is to be believed, then the technical developments of the club were made possible by the discovery of a gas, known only as "NB," which had the power to "negate weight."

Dellschau's elaborate drawings leave little doubt that any known gas could have lifted such heavy and ponderous craft. In fact, the gas bags shown in some of the drawings appear to be too small to lift even a single person, much less the craft and the equipment on board. Thus, Dellschau's mysterious NB gas must have represented a truly remarkable discovery indeed, perhaps even involving some sort of anti-gravity substance.

According to Dellschau, who spent the last 20 years of his life composing these elaborately illustrated books while living as a recluse, several "Aero" designs were actually built, test-flown and then dismantled so that their secrets would be kept. His notations also state that two of the craft were "in storage" when they were destroyed by fires that ravaged the town of Columbia, located just a few miles from Sonora. This checks with historical sources, which indicate that the town was indeed destroyed by fires on both of the dates given by Dellschau. And although only a few actual historical records have been found of the more than 60 people mentioned as having been members of the club, there is such a wealth of data about events which match historical facts that one must conclude that at least Dellschau must have been quite familiar with the area described and very likely lived there as claimed.

It is also possible that some of the names mentioned in his accounts are pseudonyms, or "brotherhood" names used by club members to cover their real identities — a practice that was quite common in the 19th Century secret societies.

As for the craft (or "Aeros" as they were called), it is entirely conceivable that such could have flown, if and when NB gas was employed as the lifting agent. Unfortunately, the means of its production were lost in the early 1860s after Peter Mennis, the key man in the organisation and the only one who knew the secret of the gas, either disappeared or died.

Mennis referred to his NB gas as "Supe." In Dellschau's drawings, it is depicted as a light green liquid, which was dropped onto the top surface of a hollow roller (in later versions a half-drum with teeth or cone-like protrusions sticking out from the interior wall). Among these projections was a black, lumpy substance resembling coal.

The Supe was gravity-fed onto the drum, where it mixed with the air and various other substances present and became converted into a "hot" gas (always depicted in pink). This NB gas was then used to drive the machinery on board, including wheels for land travel, paddles for water, and compressor motors for aerial navigation. From these it was fed into relatively small gas bags for storage, with the excess being used for thrust by means of remarkably advanced nozzles situated at various places fore and aft for forward and reverse motion.

There appears to have been a constant grumbling because of Peter Mennis' reluctance to divulge the secret of the gas. In one of his accounts, Dellschau tells about Mennis' own aircraft design, the Aero Gander (also known as "the Goosey"), and of the disappointment felt by the other members at this reluctance

to share his secret formula with them. This account (typical of Dellschau's fractured English) reads: "Now as the Goosey had been used day and night, rain or snow, in still or boisterous weather... why did Constant and Mischer [two other club members] grumble? Their idea of a constant weatherproof Falleasy is as sure improvement, and as in them days—the main object—to be able to cross the plain—and avoid Indians—or whuite *[sic]* mans attacks makes Constant come very near, but Mennis would sell no Supe, and they could not make it themselves. They had to stay on Earth."

Peter Mennis evidently either disappeared or died (perhaps murdered during an internecine squabble that eventually split the group) sometimes in the early 1860s, leaving surviving elements of the club without motive power. They continued to design Aeros for several years thereafter, but apparently broke up when nobody could rediscover the secret formula.

Under dozens of drawings there is the statement, "Peter Mennis you are not forgotten" and the frequent bemoaning "No More Supe."

Motive power notwithstanding, many of the Sonora Club Aeros employed a variety of remarkable "modern" ideas, such as hydraulic, pneumatic and retractable landing gear, shock absorbers, inflatable pontoons for landing on water, hot gas/air jets for thrusting, powered wheels for moving on land, and even parachutes and other safety devices for emergencies. Two different types of landing and search lights were also shown.

Dellschau himself came to Texas sometime in the early 1870s. For a time he lived in Brenham, moving to Houston about 1880 to become a sales clerk. In 1890, he left town for several months. When he returned, he was a changed man: nervous and fearful. He became a janitor in a store, spending most of his time in the stockrooms and loft.

Eventually he quit working altogether and stayed in his room, not leaving it even to eat, and complaining that he feared for his life.

It was also after his return from his mystery trip that he began drawing and writing the story of the Sonora Aero Club and NYMZA. Although his writings do not reflect the near paranoia that he obviously experienced, they do indicate that some of the club's members met deaths that could not be attributed to mere accidents, and that this had come about because of their penchant for talking too much or because they tried to personally profit from the club's work.

From reading his books, one gets the impression that he wants to tell the world

about the club, but is afraid to do so and thus employs ciphers, acronyms, broken English and German, and other "hidden ways."

"You will — Wonder Weave r— " he writes, "you will unriddle these writings. They are my stock of open knowledge. They — will end like all others — with good intentions, but too weak-willed to assign — put to work."

Did NYMZA and the Sonora Aero Club really exist, or were they merely visions in the fevered brain of a crazed eccentric? There are many more mysteries here than we have space to write about.

[Written by Jimmy Ward and P.G. Navarro, reprinted in: *Visions, vol.2, 1997.* Source graciously provided by Jen Lahn, Baltimore.]

Note:
Today, we've abridged our provisional records and decided that the AAA was founded at once on July 21st, 1999 and April 15th, 1983. We will celebrate the foundation of the AAA tomorrow night in order to practically explore the coincidence of future and past. Concerning the origins of the Autonomous Astronauts the source quoted above suggests a trialectical expansion of the foundation date.

'Unready to Fly' Status Report 11/11/97

by Parasol AAA

Whilst continuing to convalesce we have been turning our thoughts to other areas related to our space programme.

In particular we have all been rather concerned recently at reports that the big capitalist space agencies have pulled the plugs on a number of SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) projects as unprofitable. For autonomous astronauts deep space exploration is unthinkable without a knowledge of what lies beyond the fringes of our own tiny planet. Of course NASA thinks only of

emulating its conquistador forbears and exploiting the universe for its mineral wealth. The inhabitants of other systems reck as nothing in this Leviathan's plans. Their rich heritages and cultures are expendable before the forward march of Progress. Some lucky exo-species might find themselves pressed into slavery, for the rest NASA plans genocide. (Of course the chances are that if the NASties tread on the wrong scaly toes we'll all end up creamed across the galaxy... Either way it's not a pleasant thought.)

The AAA intend to be good spacey neighbours — keeping the back yard tidy, not making too much noise on Sundays and not allowing the cat to piss on the next world's roses.

So, we were discussing what contributions we could make towards contacting our cosmic comrades without the weighty paraphernalia of massed banks of radio telescopes or batteries of lasers, in our local pub, when we were over-heard by a crusty type with a dog on a rope who promptly offered to flog us a Ouija board. We politely declined, explaining that he had misconstrued our intent and that we had no interest in the debunked manifestations of 19th Century Spiritualist fakers. We are the post-Flash Gordon generation, raised on Hawkwind and 1950's 'B' movies and we have little time for Victorian parlour games.

However, with our collective train of thought fortuitously station halted — a new passenger boarded, stowing its intellectual baggage in the gangway.

We got to thinking about matters paranormal, in particular Electronic Voice Phenomenon and whether it had any bearing on the proceedings in hand. Considering that it might, we pooled our knowledge of this esoteric science and found it sadly wanting. After kicking-out time we hurried home to dig out a few old copies of Fortean Times for the low-down. (see FT 104, Nov. '97)

EVP is about the voices which appear at random from detuned radios or audio tape recordings of nothing in particular. Some believe that they are voices from the grave or spirit messengers.

Whilst recognising we were off track so far as contacting aliens, never-the-less even the most hardened Dialectical Materialists amongst us were excited by the prospects.

How cool to record a few choice quippings of Oscar Wilde or Charlie Marx's stock market tips. Still better might be nuggets of Tesla technology or handy new ways to harness Orgone courtesy of Willie Reich.

Of course we all agreed that the real prize would be to plug into that late, great, Erich Von Danniken of Trotskyism, Juan Posadas, for an update on his thesis that Flying Saucers are buzzing about everywhere happily spreading communist ideas and exporting revolution to less advanced planets.

We recorded on to the tape the following message:

"This is Parasol AAA seeking advice or help with our space explorations, please leave your message after the tone... beeeep."

Flippant we know but, hell, these voices are apparently everywhere and only too pleased to make themselves heard.

We then proceeded to record the ether with a background of noise.

EVP Report 1

Recording commenced at 7.48pm on 12/11/97 and ran for approximately 15 minutes.

The clean, white hiss of static was heavily modulated by unavoidable traffic noise and voice leakage from an adjacent room. Upon playback we found that as our ears adjusted to the peaks, troughs and drop-offs of the etheric sound wall, we felt (rather than heard) the deeply submerged growl of a male voice in one-way radio monologue.

No words were discernible. The Cosmic Background Radiation continued to fill our ears.

Due to the archaic, gaussed-up heads of our recorder, the underlying cassette track had not been cleanly erased. Erratically, the plink, plink, fizz of a cheap Casio keyboard rhythm pre-set fought its way to the surface for breath and swam valiantly in the magnetic fields.

The traffic rumbled on.

Mayhap the spirit ether was especially quiet tonight, but we were reminded of the words of blistering retort the Bard put into the mouth of Hotspur;

GLENDOWER: *"I can call spirits from the vastly deep."*
HOTSPUR: *"Why, so can I, or so can any man;*
But will they come when you do call for them?"

We Have a World to Leave Behind!

by Inner City AAA

'My Lord, we are Four or Five, some say Honest, others Foolish, but all say Drunken Fellows, now drinking Your Lordships Health at the Tavern; and our Poetical Inclinations are all attended with Poetical Pockets. Some of us have Sixpence and Eight Farthings, some neither Eight Farthings nor a Sixpence; so that the chiefest of our dependence is upon the strength of this Dedication. And since the Majority of Us are too dirty for Your Levee, we have pick'd out the nicest Spark of us All, to make this present by.'

Tom Brown — Petition to the Earl of Dorset (Miscellanies Over Claret, 1697)

London offers many possibilities for inner city space exploration programmes. As a city composed of startling contrasts and diverse zones of experience, London inhabitants use urban space in a variety of ways, not all of which are sanctioned by the authorities. London continues to observe a multitude of everyday conflicts, including the Association of Autonomous Astronauts' own explorations into sex in zero gravity, raves in space and games of three-sided football. With this in mind, Inner City AAA have conducted an intense series of researches into the psychogeographical qualities of various London sites, and we are now able to announce that our first launch pad has been successfully located in Grub Street.

'Grub Street' entered the language in the 17th Century and became a household phrase in Hanoverian England, a metaphor for the seamier side of life. Grub Street was a place of filth, clutter, noise and squalor, home to crowds of sharpers, thieves, beggars and harlots. Then, following the lapse of the Press Licensing Act in 1695, scores of printing presses based themselves in the area, accompanied by the writers that could now hope to make a living from their newly established profession, no longer having to depend on the patronage of aristocrats.

Grub Street came to be associated with the literary hacks that lived and worked there throughout the 17th and 18th Centuries. The huge increase in publishing fed the growing appetite of a predominantly middle-class reading public. But this rise of a publishing industry also increased the availability of politically subversive texts, broadsheets and pamphlets that were largely self-published and that

created a dynamic within society still present today. For example, the various conflicts over the idea of free expression on the Internet can be traced back to the antagonisms created by the culture of Grub Street.

The denizens of Grub Street created an atmosphere of sedition and revolt, of combat with the forces of law and order. Grub Sreet lay just outside of the old medieval city wall, and had always been a space beyond the control of city authorities. Milton had once lived in the area, and in 1830 Grub Street was replaced with its present-day designation as Milton Street, in an attempt to clean up its popular image as a place of non-existent morals, distinct street life and hang-outs for disreputable writers. These ghosts still remain, and Inner City AAA have reclaimed the cultural heritage of Grub Street in order to refuse the Victorians their sanctimonious cover-up.

We have located our launch pad at the northern end of Grub Street, in an empty and derelict square that lies several feet beneath road level, and forms part of an abandoned building that was a former college of higher education. Our seizure of this space demonstrates the AAA's tactic of taking whatever we can find and making our own use out of it. In addition, this specific site, a former educational establishment, is used to reflect the AAA's attitude towards the organisation of knowledge within western culture. The AAA has resisted intellectual specialisation by promoting transversal approaches that combine different and diverse ways of thinking.

Much of the original Grub Street has been swallowed up by the Barbican, a huge complex of luxury flats, art galleries, cinemas and a library. Our Grub Street launch pad is also near the financial centre of London, the square mile that forms a nerve centre for capitalism. By situating our launch pad here we have deliberately put ourselves in close proximity to the very culture that we intend to destroy by building and successfully launching our own spaceships. Despite the number of surveillance cameras in the area, our games of three-sided football have confirmed that the authorities are not equipped for preventing us from using this site as our chosen launch pad.

Grub is derived from the old english word 'grube' meaning a drain or ditch. Close to Grub Street a tributary stream had ran to the notorious Fleet Ditch near Holborn. These ditches were used for hundreds of years as sewers by local residents. Even dead bodies could be found dumped in these disgusting waters. Even though this water has long since been concreted over, our investigations have shown that it still flows beneath our launch site, and we have already began exploring ways of tapping into the psychic energies associated with underground rivers. These forces will assist our plans for independent space exploration, and

help us as we continue to generate a huge underswell of activity that connects with our network of groups dedicated to developing strategies for escaping gravity.

Grub can also refer to a maggot or worm that is able to infest a larger body, and digest it from the inside out. Our Grub Street launch site is also then the ideal spot for plotting further media invasion campaigns. This element to our space exploration program aims at planting ideas within a variety of contexts, ideas that are able to resist the filtering techniques applied by commercial publishers and broadcasters. As these 'idea grubs' penetrate the thick flesh of the media, the concept of independent, community-based space travel is taken and used by people who may not even know of the AAA's existence.

The culture of Grub Street contributed to the development of satire as a weapon against the prevailing order. Inner City AAA has located its launch pad in Grub Street in order to continue these Grubbaen tendencies, and to make satire a tool for community-based space exploration. But whereas in the 17th and 18th Centuries Grub Street and its libertine persuasions existed as a physical location in the geography of London, the forces of social control have since then significantly developed their own strategies for coercion. Now Grub Street must be reclaimed, not only by locating our launch site here, but also as part of a geography of the imagination, as a Grub Street of the mind that combines semiotic terrorism, self-confessed propaganda, information warfare, comical devices, cultural sabotage and a wicked, twisted sense of the absurd.

Escape From Dimensionality!

The First Meditation from Nomad Association of Autonomous Astronauts

In order for us to fully imagine the practicalities and possibilites of space exploration, to exist in what the AAA call The Dreamtime, the Nomad AAA believe that we must start from the premise that all current notions of dimensionality, all our known relations with time and space, should be rejected immediately.

Many 'eastern' philosophies have no room for Aristotelian logic, the right and the wrong, the up and the down. They have made a logical, spiritual progression from linear poles (the black vs. the white) towards a third path — a higher middle ground.

Polarity (by its nature a human conceit) cannot exist in space — like the Grand Old Duke, in space we are neither Up nor Down. If we therefore discount such two-dimensional existence, it follows that a middle or third way cannot exist either, as it is defined by the very things it proports to transcend. It would seem that to exist in The Dreamtime, we must then reject not only the polar opposites and the third path but in fact all perceived forms of "earth-bound" dimensionality.

We cannot therefore have the fifth dimension of time if we have discounted all others. We only need to examine the common misaprehension that time is linear to see how shallow the concept really is. Spiritualists may argue that time flows in both directions, but they succeed only in grounding themselves in the belief that there are only two ways to travel. Earth-bound time, as a concept, must therefore also be discarded. Earthtime will be replaced by Dreamtime.

With all dimensions thus dissolved, we cannot therefore allow ourselves to be blinded by the fundamental ideology that we exist in any here or now. We are the only species on this planet that concerns itself so destructively with the concepts of age and location. In space, in the Dreamtime, one's place and date of birth will be deemed nonsensical.

Whilst acknowledging that the concept of the nomad is still dimensionally bound, the Nomad AAA has re-defined the notion of no fixed abode to include both space and time. If we are to be Nomadic travellers through the Dreamtime, we must start this process by relinquishing the harness of our address. We must open our

minds to the concept of living everywhere and everywhen.

The Nomad AAA believes that an escape from gravity will lead not only to an escape from dimensionality, but ultimately to an escape from what we notionally call 'reality'. Once we have touched the sky, our minds will be tuned into an existence of infinite possibilities.

Gravity and E~scape

(excerpts from the art of e~scape)

by Konrad Becker, AAA Vienna

Human beings need possibilities to escape not only on account of political oppression or exclusion: they have to find ways to escape the vicious circle of forced work for wages and imposed leisure. It is necessary to evade symbolic dominance and cultural entrainment; it is vital to flee the 'reality' of everyday life and it is necessary to escape the flatlands of binary logic and the three-dimensional world.

Society's disapproval of a 'flight from reality' soon betrays itself as a propaganda lie targeted at the educated classes. Ultimately, it cannot be determined which reality is meant in this scenario ravaged by the misery of the normal and the terror of normality. It is not those who flee from these representations and concepts of the world who are sick but those who have lost their ability to escape the straight-jackets of these so-called realities: reality as a normative hallucination is the virtual prison of social operating systems.

Systems of representation and images of the world as simulation of reality are highly efficient inductors, and hardly an expense is shunned to sustain them. Maps as representation of geographical topology are processed and manipulated for strategic reasons and access to high resolution satellite cameras is restricted.

Maps of the world are an instrument of political power. Proportional distortions resulting from the projection of three-dimensional space onto a flat surface are sanctioned by an aura of objectivity and then used for propaganda purposes. The ways of life are flagged and tagged. Maps not only offer an abstract view of the world itself but also contain information about those who create them. This becomes particularly obvious with old maps. If we want to find out from which perspective the world has been presented, we need only locate the centre of the representation — the 'land of the middle', the centre of the surrounding satellite states.

If their flight is to succeed, escape artists have to be masters of the terrain. Navigation requires the manipulation of symbols in meaningful representations of topological structures. Virtual control also assures the hegemony over the resources of interpretation. In this sense cultural activists, in accordance with their new understanding of the artist's position, use networks as meta-data tools of inspired interpretation of data within a panopticum of commodified world views. Guerrilla semiotics replacing pretentious artistic creation with recombinant cultural synthesis of the techno-voodoo memetic environment.

Flight as retreat is of particular importance as a tactic for individuals or small groups (for example in guerrilla warfare). Fleeing instead of resisting gives small, flexible, and mobile units an advantage over large, hierarchical structures of domination. To evade an attack instead of looking for confrontation and to succeed in escaping is the foundation for a future victory.

The wide public resonance of popular escape artists such as Harry Houdini who quickly became a legend revealed the symbolic of the great escape. The escape artist is an expert on the topology of the knots that bind him and a specialist when it comes to the warps and distortion of planes, lines and forms. In an age of increasingly networked machines and control systems leading towards total surveillance, Harry Houdini, whose spectacular acts of escape made him famous at the beginning of the century, is turning into a role model.

The invisible dimensions are usually explained as folded within the visible space. Intermediate spaces shrink or expand in the change of dimensional perspective and are related to the warps and wrinkles in dimensional space that are created by gravitational forces. The escape artist uses the smallest gap as an open space for planning his flight.

Black Holes warp space through their gravitational forces. The economy of attention creates singularities: dark stars as social sculptures in mediaspace, mindfocus in telematic flesh, with habits as expensive and capricious as tribal

African village fetishes. Personalised attractors generated by economic wars in the competition for attention span draw their self-confidence from the unconscious of the target audience.

In the battle for the psycho-cybernetic co-ordinates of the world models, the stargazers rule. Cybernetics, the study of communication and control mechanisms, appears to be a science of the interrelatedness of symbols. The interpreters of the referential framework are the navigators and control artists. The old tradition of hypertext connects star constellations, letters and abstract beings on various levels of meaning and ideographic methods of visualisation.

Lockpicking the future requires multi-dimensional maps of the world for new exits and safe havens in hyperspace; it needs passports to allow travels from normative, global reality to parallel cultures and invisible nations, it requires nomad supply stations on the routes taken by the revolutionary practice of aimless flight; it needs psycho-geographical maps that show the way to Dreamtime and public transport to Kaddath.

All of us want to escape gravity and travel to the stars. Autonomous Astronauts are working with space-time warps created by gravitational waves of black holes that open ERP-bridges (named after Einstein-Rozen-Podolsky) to parallel universes and distant realms of space-time. Science fiction and popular culture have long been using practical applications of poly-dimensionality and the possibility of travelling the dimensions, faster than light, through the gravitational channels of wormholes.

Escape artists and hedonic engineering towards escape routes from an anxiously bored society.

The art of escape becomes increasingly important for a culture of escapism that transcends ordinary hedonism.

Moving in Several Directions at Once

by Jason Skeet, Inner City AAA

A spectre is haunting the planet, the spectre of independent, community-based space travel. The Association of Autonomous Astronauts (AAA) is the most important space exploration programme active in the world today, and unlike other organisations that claim to escape from gravity (organisations that are infact paralysed by their own inflated sense of self-importance) the AAA has demonstrated the possibilities of well-planned assaults against the state, corporate and military monopoly of space exploration. With the third anniversary of its official launch, the AAA can reveal the specific phases to its Five Year Plan for establishing by the year 2000 a world-wide network of local, community-based space exploration groups. Phase One — the launch of the AAA's space exploration programme. Phase Two — declaration of Information War against government-funded space agencies throughout the universe. Phase Three — the Dreamtime, a collective process of exploring the possibilities that open up when we form autonomous communities in outer space. Phase Four — a period of consolidation, during which Autonomous Astronauts examine the achievements that they have made so far. Phase Five — the final push into the year 2000. The Bologna Intergalactic Conference, April 18-19 1998, marks the beginning of the fourth phase of the AAA's Five Year Plan, its CONSOLIDATION.

Since the launch of the AAA on April 23rd 1995, Autonomous Astronauts have not been content to merely destroy the state, corporate and military monopoly of space travel. AAA groups have also succeeded in exposing the belief systems adopted by those who attempt to dismiss the AAA as a so-called 'serious joke'. These idiots not only 'believe' that the AAA cannot possibly 'really' succeed in its aims, but these buffoons also 'believe' that words have fixed meanings, and in this way are therefore inextricably linked to the maintenance of the status quo regarding space travel. The AAA has developed space exploration as a language game that moves in several directions at once, and so shown that anyone can use words to imagine and create their own possibilities. Words can be used to subvert the commonly held view that space travel requires vast amounts of money, and language has been set in motion by the AAA as part of a vast collective fiction that concludes with the creation of a world-wide network of AAA groups all dedicated to building their own spaceships. To the AAA there is no difference between 'fact' and 'fiction' as they exist within independent and community-based space travel.

Moving In Several Directions At Once!

The AAA has already demonstrated how it can influence events through a process of morphic resonance. As more and more people find out about the possibilities of independent space travel, it becomes easier for others to also become aware, so that the AAA's ideas have an effect on those who may not even know of the AAA's existence. Following from this, it seems that in retaliation against the AAA's Information War on government-funded space agencies, the US military have conducted tests with the MIRACL (Mid-Infrared Advanced Chemical Laser) based at the White Sands Missile Range in southern New Mexico. These tests, carried out in November 1997, used the MIRACL, which has a beam about six feet wide, to fire on an orbiting satellite in an attempt to destroy it. Predictably, the US government justified these tests by insisting that they need to control who has access to satellite information in times of war. However, the AAA is convinced that the true motive behind these tests is the threat posed to the state, corporate and military monopoly of space travel by the possibilities of independent, community-based space exploration as represented by the Association of Autonomous Astronauts.

At the Vienna Intergalactic Conference in June 1997 the AAA ran workshops with a group of Austrian teenagers collectively designing and building a WorldWideWeb site. This project began with the participants travelling to the future to squat the abandoned Russian space station Mir. The group then sent a report back to planet earth about its experiences aboard the Mir in the form of a web site. Subsequent events on the Mir throughout 1997 have confirmed the AAA's propaganda efforts. The various problems on the space station have demystified space exploration for a great many people. The Mir has been continuously patched together by its various crews, and this has enabled the technology to be thought about in a more down-to-earth way, comparable to how people relate to a second-hand car that needs constant attention. The events on the Mir have also revealed the arrogance of government space agencies in allowing their astronauts to be so badly prepared for difficult situations. For example, when a computer failure on the space station led to a power shut-down that plunged the crew into cold and darkness for several hours, why had no-one remembered to pack a torch with spare batteries, as well as several extra thick jumpers for warmth? Anyone who has ever been camping back on planet earth will know the importance of being prepared for these kind of emergencies.

The Vienna Intergalactic Conference formed part of the Dreamtime phase to the AAA's Five Year Plan, and also enabled the AAA to involve local communities in the process of exploring the possibilities that open up when we go into outer space. Prior to the conference, the AAA had ran a highly successful spaceship building project with groups of Viennese school children. Another fascinating discussion that has emerged from the Dreamtime has concerned dress codes for

a proposed intergalactic rendezvous on the moon. The SHITS (SkinHeads as Independent Travellers in Space) demand a 'sharp' attitude towards clothes, and have even accused some Autonomous Astronauts of being too 'shaggy' in their approach to fashion. In response, other AAA groups, including the Disconauts, have proposed space suit designs for future raves in space that include glamorous additions like sequins and fake fur. What has emerged from this debate as it relates to the AAA's Dreamtime has now become clear — Autonomous Astronauts will not go into space dressed in the dreary uniform worn by government sponsored space travellers.

By concentrating on how space exploration technology is used and who has access to that technology, the AAA has escaped both scientific rationalism and its mirror image, romanticism. The AAA has done this through a collective Dreamtime process, a playful and speculative exploration of the possibilities that open up to us when we form autonomous communities in outer space. And unlike utopianism (in either its rational or romantic forms), the AAA has unravelled the threads that run throughout history to create an organisation that never has any recruitment problems, since anyone is encouraged to get involved by simply starting their own AAA group. As an expanding network of independent, community-based groups the AAA has transcended the bureaucratic forms of organisation adopted by all other space exploration programs.

No-one can now write a history of space travel and neglect to include the contributions of the Association of Autonomous Astronauts. It is the declared aim of the AAA to ensure that all future discussions of space travel will understand how the AAA has revealed the contradictions created by the development of space exploration technologies. There will be increased exploration of space, and the AAA is determined that this will not be inextricably linked to the expansion of capitalism. The AAA confirms that we can go into space, not as conquerors of the universe, but as a collection of independent, community-based groups dedicated to building their own spaceships. Autonomous Astronauts of the world, move in several directions at once!

Are You An Autonomous Astronaut?

Here follows a questionnaire to verify your level of "autonomous astronauticity" according to AAA Bologna. This is taken from Autonomous Astronaut Riccardo Balli's book "A Taste of Lunar Dust".

1. Do you think that the Apollo moon landings really happened?

a) Yes. Neil Armstrong really made his famous moonwalk and pushed the Stars and Stripes into the lunar dust. Indeed, as the Disconauts have suggested, by 1969 there were probably very few places in the world left for the American flag to fly unmolested.
b) No. It was just a hoax created by NASA and the US government in some TV studio in Nevada.
c) Maybe, but I don't believe in conspiracy theories enough to choose the second answer.

2. Do you think that sex in space is more fun than on planet earth?

a) No. I'm already scared of sex on planet earth, never mind sex in space.
b) Yes. The absence of gravity will enable limitless passion, and should the participants require a point of stability, then specially designed bondage equipment will secure them in the position they enjoy the most. Also, AIDS will disappear since life in space will demand that everyone wears space suits equipped with condoms.
c) Maybe, but are you sure there will be no 'space diseases'?

3. Are you satisfied with the level of scientific research regarding space exploration?

a) Yes. Sitting in front of the telly watching shuttle launches is even better than the World Cup football final.
b) No. I believe that NASA and all the other government funded space agencies are completely incapable of organising successful space exploration programmes.
c) I don't know, maybe yes, maybe no, ohohohoh those NASA space suits are so cool though.

4. What kind of music will you listen to in outer space?

a) Country and western, the soundtrack for NASA space exploration...before that it was the wild west that had to be won, native American Indians to exterminate, the Klondike gold to dig up...now they have to open up a McDonald's on the moon and organise golf tournaments on the lunar surface...
b) Dance music — just check out the oddball assortment of aliens playing Glenn Miller style jazz in 'Star Wars', or the scene in 'Return of the Jedi' where there is a funky ensemble of aliens, or even Blade Runner with its jazz and soul soundtrack.
c) Guitars and drums in space, rock "n" roll! (fuck, please, no).

5. It's five minutes to midnight, December 31st 1999. What are you going to do?

a) Make a toast with your friends and family after playing bingo at your aunt's place.
b) Get into your self-built spaceship and leave the planet behind.
c) Fall asleep.

6. NASA astronauts work seven days a week in space and never have any spare time. What do you think about it?

a) It's fair. They get paid by the hour.
b) Unbelievable. They are having a unique experience and they have no time to reflect on it, to write or listen to music, they must only work.
c) Well, these Nasanauts are very narrow-minded.

7. Let's suppose you are interested in the AAA. What do you do?

a) After two days, you've already forgotten everything about this publication.
b) Join a local AAA group or if there isn't one start one. Inform all the other AAA groups and begin networking with them.
c) These Autonomous Astronauts must be mad, unreliable people.

8. The future will be in...?

a) The European Community.
b) Leaving the planet behind.
c) I can only think as far as the end of next week, never mind anything beyond that.

9. When you were a child, what did you want to be?

a) A policeman.
b) An astronaut.
c) An adult.

10. Gravity is...?

a) Necessary.
b) I prefer levity.
c) Something that gives me a headache.

Results:

If your answers included mostly (a)'s, then you should take this pamphlet, put it on the highest shelf in your house and never look at it again.

If your answers included mostly (b)'s, then we strongly invite you to get in touch with the AAA immediately.

If you answered mostly (c)'s, then it is possible that you have a curiosity about space exploration but continue to take yourself too seriously. A sense of humour will help sort you out.

Phase Four

CONSOLIDATION

Message Transmitted to the Bologna Intergalactic Conference, April 18-19 1998

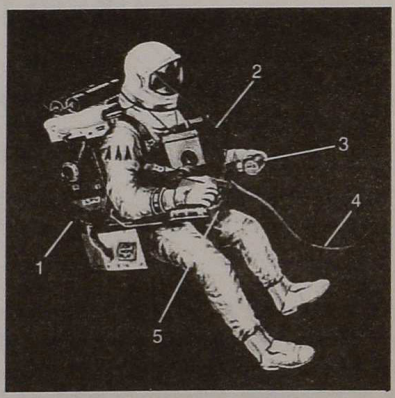
From the Association of Autonomous Astronauts

The Association of Autonomous Astronauts (AAA) move into the fourth phase of their Five Year Plan for establishing a world-wide network of local, community-based AAA groups. This phase is described as the CONSOLIDATION, during which Autonomous Astronauts examine the achievements that they have made so far and prepare for the final push into the year 2000.

The AAA has conducted a highly successful and meticulously planned campaign against the state, corporate and military monopoly of space exploration. Autonomous Astronauts now require a period of intense reflection, time to gather themselves together and analyse all that has happened to them. This important phase of consolidation marks a critical moment in the Five Year Plan, the point at which AAA groups decide how they will proceed into the final stage of the AAA's evolutionary project.

The Bologna Intergalactic Conference will bring together AAA delegates from around the world to present reports from their local, community-based space exploration groups. The conference will also expose local communities in Bologna to the possibilities that open up when we form autonomous communities in outer space. Moving in several directions at once, the AAA has declared, **'Only those who attempt the impossible will achieve the absurd'.**

Incredible AAA T-Shirt Offer!!!



rave in space:

autonomous astronaut dance manoeuvring unit

key: 1. Modular dance manoeuvring unit; 2. Noise box connected to headphones in helmet; 3. Hand control releasing gaseous amphetamines into helmet; 4. Fibre optic cable connected to DJ booth; 5. Hand control for dance movements.

printed white on black
top quality 'screen stars' XL shirt
***** AAA logo (front) *****
***** rave in space person (reverse) *****

support independent space travel
payment (inc.P+P): £12 (uk) £15 (rest of universe)

orders to:
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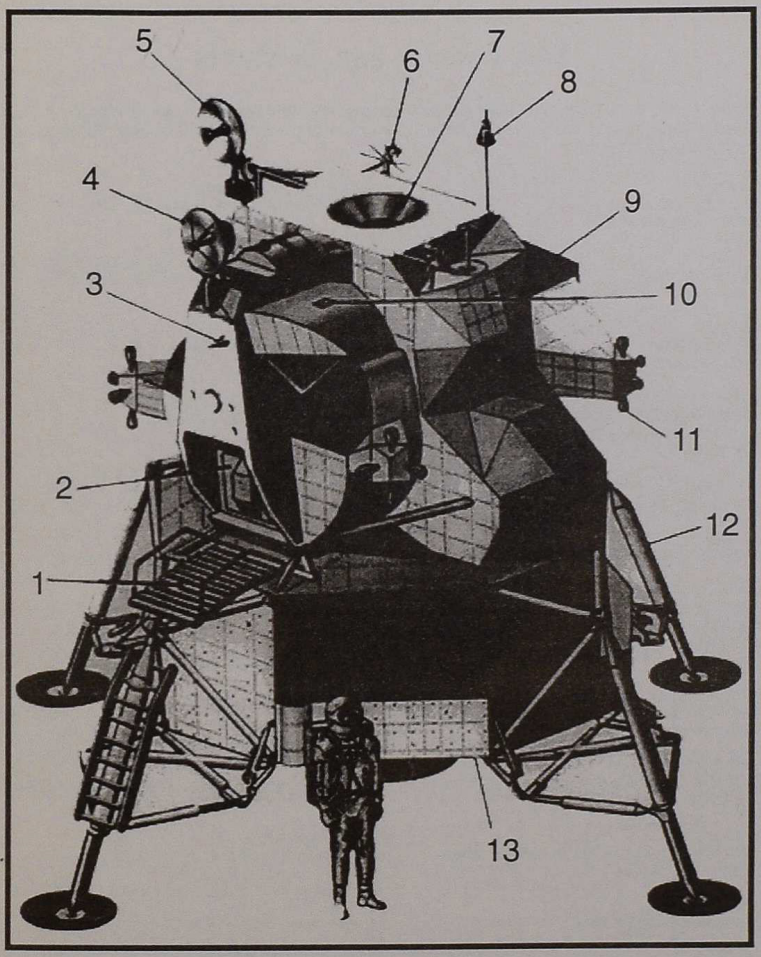
London
WC1N 3XX

'Dreamtime Is Upon Us!'
the AAA's Second Annual Report
is still available
price: £3
cheques payable to: Turbulence



life in space:

autonomous astronaut spacebase

key: 1. Balcony for coffee-breaks; 2. Entrance to sensory deprivation unit; 3. Inter-com to jacuzzi; 4. Satellite TV dish; 5. Pirate radio transmitter; 6. Laser unit for raves in space; 7. Access shute to play room; 8. Outside light for late-night barbeques; 9. Recording studio; 10. Overhead window for printing press; 11. External sound system; 12. Landing gear; 13. Basement party space.

AAA Groups and Contacts

Unlike bureaucratic state controlled space agencies, the AAA develops as a non-hierarchical network of like-minded groups around the world dedicated to local, community-based space exploration programs. Here is a list of AAA branches:

AAA Euston
marks@post.avnet.co.uk
www.avnet.co.uk/mahee

Nomad AAA
stuartb@earthling.net
www.geocities.com/Paris/Metro/8987

Oceania AAA
andi@deepdisc.com
www.deepdisc.com

Quip AAA
okannaborra@geocities.com
www.geocities.com/ResearchTriangle/Thinktank/1344/

Skin Heads as Independent Travellers in Space
www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Hangar/2558

Virus 33 AAA
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AAA Wien
c/o Public Netbase, Museumquartier,
Museumplatz 1, A-1070 Vienna, AUSTRIA
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AAA Paris Nord
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AAA Paris Sud
c/o Christophe Cauchy, 92 rue Didot, 75014
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AAA Pen Ar Ster
c/o Nicolas Milice, 18 rue de l'Armee d'Orient,
75018 Paris, FRANCE

AAA Penhars
117 Avenue Jacques Le Viol,
2900 Kemper, FRANCE

AAA Rosko
14 Cite du Labyrinthe, 75020 Paris, FRANCE

AAA Shelta
D'Essence, 2 allée Louis XVI,
59600 Mauberge, FRANCE

AAAA Cosmos
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AAA Trento
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AAA Bologna
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AAA "Superfly" Roma
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A spectre is haunting the planet, the spectre of independent, community-based space travel. Autonomous Astronauts continue to move in several directions at once in the process of building their own spaceships. This Third Annual Report contains documents from the Association of Autonomous Astronauts' world-wide network of independent, community-based groups, and also includes information about the AAA's Intergalactic Conferences that have explored the possibilites that open up to us when we form autonomous communties in outer space. Read this publication from the most exciting space exploration program active in the world today, and discover the AAA's well-planned psychic assaults, acts of semiotic terrorism and skillful media invasions.

'The AAA aims to change the face of space travel forever. They intend to build their own rockets so that ordinary Joes and Josephines can reach for the stars.'
The Big Issue

'Should space exploration be the exclusive preserve of governments? Meet some starry-eyed enthusiasts who think not, and have clubbed together to stake their claim to a slice of the universal pie.'
The Daily Telegraph

'Some of the most bizarre reading you'll get your hands on...everyone should have sex in space, that's the message of the AAA...they seem to delight in plaguing the press.'
Forum

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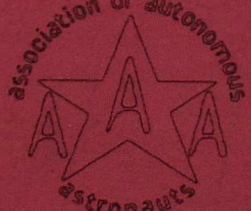

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